



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL



**RACMED**

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**RACMED**  
Mr Giampaolo Buonfiglio  
(Chairperson)  
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Italy

**Subject: Advice on BFT and SWO-MED**

*Yr reference: 297/AV*

Dear Mr Buonfiglio,

Thank you for RACMED's advice for the ICCAT annual meeting that took place in Cape Town from 18 to 25 November 2013. The issues brought up in this document were carefully considered in the preparation for the meeting. I am pleased to inform you that several of your requests were met by proposals formulated by the Commission and approved in Cape Town.

**As to your proposal for an increase in Bluefin Tuna TAC in the convention area**

Based on a proposal by Japan, ICCAT decided that the TAC for bluefin tuna should remain at 13400 tonnes. This was in line with the negotiating position agreed within the European Union based on the scientific advice on the stock.

During its meeting in September, the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) confirmed the recovery signs for the eastern Atlantic bluefin tuna stock but due to the uncertainties it was not in a position to advise an increase in TAC as it remained difficult to assess the magnitude and the speed of the recovery.

A small increase in TAC, as advocated by some parties at the annual meeting, would not have resulted in any significant increases in catches at the level of the operators, while at the same time possibly putting recovery the results already achieved in jeopardy. A stable TAC will allow a better assessment of the resources through the stabilisation of the management measures as recommended by the SRCS. This should in turn allow SCRS to confirm the extent of the recovery at next year's updated assessment.

**As to the need for control and inspections to bring clearer and unambiguous framework and also be applied to recreational fishing**

This has been taken on-board by the Commission and resulted in measures being adopted during the ICCAT annual meeting. For instance, the protocol regarding controls using stereoscopic cameras was proposed by the European Union and will now clarify and harmonize these procedures across all parties.

Further clarifications and harmonization in controls will also result from the implementation of the next specific control and inspection programme (SCIP) for fisheries exploiting highly migratory species in the Mediterranean and exploiting small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea.

Regarding recreational fishing, no action was taken this year on the basis that this is an area largely under the control of contracting parties CPCs and that several Member States have not issued recreational licences in 2013.

**As to research and cooperation between SCRS/ICCAT and fisheries operators**

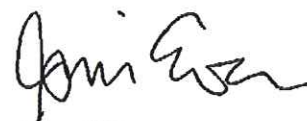
Regarding research (feeding competition) and improved cooperation between SCRS/ICCAT and fisheries operators, ICCAT endorsed an EU proposal for a better dialogue between scientist and managers by establishing a standing working group. We believe that this is a first step in the right direction.

**As to your request to avoid taking any new measures with regard to Mediterranean swordfish until the results from the existing measured have been fully assessed**

Although the SCRS had recommended to consider management measures aimed at reducing capacity for swordfish fishery, this was considered premature without having an assessment of the impact of the measures adopted in 2011 for Mediterranean swordfish. Therefore, the EU limited itself to table a proposal to correct the weight conversion factors relating to the definition of minimum landing sizes in terms of weights, in order to be consistent with the conversion factors previously adopted by ICCAT. This proposal was adopted.

We would like to thank you for providing input. We are confident that this successful collaboration will continue in the future for our mutual benefit. If you have any question on this reply, you can contact Ms Evangelia Georgitsi, coordinator of the Regional Advisory Councils ([evangelia.georgitsi@ec.europa.eu](mailto:evangelia.georgitsi@ec.europa.eu); +32.2.295.04.43).

Yours sincerely,



Lowri Evans

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